

REGULAR SCHOOL BOARD MEETING

GADSDEN COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD
MAX D. WALKER ADMINISTRATION BUILDING
35 MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. BLVD.
QUINCY, FLORIDA

March 24, 2026

6:00 P.M.

This meeting was open to the public and electronically recorded.

The following Board members were present: Mr. Leroy McMillan, Chairman; Ms. Cathy S. Johnson; Ms. Stacey S. Hannigon; Mr. Steve Scott; and Mr. Charlie D. Frost. Also present were Mr. Elijah Key, Superintendent and Secretary to the Board; Mrs. Deborah Minnis, Attorney for the Board; and others.

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by the Chairman, Mr. Leroy McMillan, at 6:05 p.m.

2. OPENING PRAYER

The opening prayer was led by Pastor Dr. Arie Sailor of Celebration Christian Center in Quincy,

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Recited in unison.

4. RECOGNITIONS

Mr. Key recognized the finance department for the great work this past year. He stated that during this past year, he had not received phone calls with current or past issues. He stated that they have been doing a great job this year. He asked Mrs. Bruner to introduce her staff.

Mrs. Bruner introduced the following staff members: Ms. Cyrilla Hackley - Assistant Director of Finance; Ms. Deborah Young - Budget Manager (Budget, Grants); Mr. Melvin Collins - Chief Account Clerk (Benefits, Child Support, Garnishments, Unemployment); Mrs. Stacy Sanabria - Chief Account Clerk (Payroll); Mrs. Rosa Yzaguirre - Chief Account Clerk (Accounts Payable); Mrs. Brandi Deese - Chief Account Clerk (Purchasing); Mrs. Laura Thomas - Chief Account Clerk (Retirement, Leave, Dockage, Worker's Compensation) and Mrs. Kathy Sneads (Consultant). Mr. Key thanked the finance department for their hard work. He stated that it has been a great turnaround within the past year.

Mr. Steve Scott recognized all the teachers and students that came back after spring break. He stated that as a retired teacher, Christmas break and spring break is awfully hard to come back to work.

5. CITIZEN COMMENTS AND CONCERNS

Ms. Judith Mandela (GCCTA Union President) addressed the Board with a few questions. She wanted to know what was the deadline for the FEMA Funding and why is there a deadline? Mrs. Bruner stated that the deadline was given to the district by the Florida Department of Emergency Management. She stated that it's meant as a recommendation in order for FEMA to approve the district changes in projects. She stated that we need to have a timeline anticipated to have things completed by June 30th or mostly completed by June 30th. She stated that any projects not completed by June 30th may be wiped and the money pulled back from FEMA. Ms. Mandela wanted to know if the district had secured the initial amount for the FEMA funding, and if not, what is the final amount that the district will receive? Mr. Key stated that there is no extra money coming from FEMA. He stated that this all goes back to Hurricane Michael and probably just because of the lack of documentation of all the repairs that were made back then. He stated that some of these repairs probably were made or paid for by the restart grant that was given by the government. He stated that you can't make those claims against FEMA. He stated that to take

care of any of these items that are there for FEMA, we must first of all have the money upfront and then reimbursement. He stated that there's no extra money coming to the district from FEMA. He stated that it's just replacing money that we have spent. He stated that the Board must ensure that we have money to cover the things that we're trying to cover. He stated that if we can't cover that expense based on monies that we have, then we have to leave it alone and move forward with something else. Ms. Mandela asked what was the estimated amount that the district will receive? Mr. Key stated that it's going to be based on the amount of money that we have to spend. He stated that those things are still being worked through because you got to have funding up front in order to get a reimbursement from FEMA. Ms. Mandela wanted to know if these projects indicated how much you might be planning to receive. Mr. Key stated that is for all the projects if we went for them. He stated that's some of the leeway that we were asking the Board about if there are some projects that we are not going to move forward with because we don't have the money.

Mr. Michael Brown addressed the Board. He stated that he was the Chairman of the Gadsden County Soil and Water Conservation District for the last 5-6 years. He stated that there will be a speech contest for students. He stated that the 1st place winner will receive \$300.00; 2nd place winner will receive \$200.00, and the 3rd place winner will receive \$50.00. He stated that all students will receive a token just for participating. He stated that the reason he came to address the Board is because student attendance and participation has been very low. He stated that we want to increase the student participation. He stated that this is money that we're trying to give away, and we would love to do so for our students in Gadsden County. He stated that he is willing to communicate with the right person to get this information out for our students so that they will participate in the speech contest. The Board members agreed with Mr. Brown and the information was given to Ms. Lisa Robinson, the Assistant Superintendent of Academic Services, as the point of contact to help with getting the information to the students for participation in the speech contest.

ITEMS FOR CONSENT

Mr. McMillian stated that a motion was needed to amend the agenda due to backup information being added to agenda item #10a. The motion was made by Ms. Cathy S. Johnson, seconded by Mr. Charlie D. Frost and carried unanimously.

Mr. McMillan entertained a motion to approve the remaining consent agenda. The motion was made by Ms. Stacey S. Hannigon, seconded by Mr. Charlie D. Frost and carried unanimously.

6. REVIEW OF MINUTES

- a. February 24, 2026, 4:30 p.m. – School Board Financial Workshop
- b. February 24, 2026, 6:00 p.m. - Regular School Board Meeting

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

7. PERSONNEL MATTERS (resignations, retirements, recommendations, leaves of absence, terminations of services, volunteers, and job descriptions)

- a. Personnel 2025 – 2026
- b. Personnel 2026 – 2027

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

8. BUDGET AND FINANCIAL TRANSACTIONS

- a. ESE 348 Revised Pages

Fund Source: N/A
Amount: N/A

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

10. SCHOOL FACILITY/PROPERTY

a. FEMA Projects

Fund Source: Hurricane Michael Insurance / General Fund

Amount: See Attachment

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

b. Request to Discard Property

Fund Source: N/A

Amount: N/A

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

c. B & T Fencing

Fund Source: General Funds

Amount: \$16,107.38

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

d. Threshold Inspection Services

Fund Source: PECO Funds

Amount: \$65,000.00

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

e. Brooks Building Solution Proposal

Fund Source: General Funds

Amount: \$19,397.40

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

11. EDUCATIONAL ISSUES

a. George W. Munroe Elementary School Out-of-State Field Trip Request

Fund Source: N/A

Amount: N/A

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

Items preceded by an asterisk (*) were removed from the consent agenda at the beginning of the meeting and acted upon during the discussion portion of the agenda.

*9. AGREEMENTS/CONTRACT/PROJECT APPLICATIONS

a. Contract Extension

Fund Source: General Fund

Amount: \$29,250.00

Mr. Frost expressed his concerns and made a motion to not extend the contract for the consultant, Ms. Kathy Sneads.

The motion died for lack of a second.

Mr. Steve Scott made a motion to accept the Superintendent's recommendation to approve agenda item #9a – the contract extension. The motion was seconded by Ms. Cathy S. Johnson, and carried with Mr. McMillan, Mr. Scott and Ms. Johnson voting "aye". Mr. Frost and Ms. Hannigon voted "nay".

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

b. Gadsden Educational Staff Professional Association Agreement 2024 – 2027 School Years Collective Bargaining Agreement

Fund Source: N/A

Amount: N/A

Ms. Hannigon stated that she shared with the Superintendent the contract dates from 2024 to 2027. She stated that actually the contract is slated to expire next year. She stated that she was concerned that both sides won't hold up having an actual contract to operate moving forward. She stated that she was not sure what was new, old, added, or removed in the contract. She stated that the Superintendent shared with her that maybe it was just one item that speaks to legislative action regarding entities collecting dues on behalf of unions. She stated that she was hopeful that there would be some discussion or some synopsis, some summary of sort so that as Board members we would know without reading from the front to the back. She stated that there were salary changes in the contract. She stated that moving forward she would like a presentation to show the changes, and what the impact would be to the Board.

Following discussion, Ms. Stacey S. Hannigon made a motion to accept the Superintendent's recommendation to approve agenda item #9b - GESPA Agreement 2024 to 2027 School Years Collective Bargaining Agreement. The motion was seconded by Mr. Charlie D. Frost and carried unanimously.

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

*10. SCHOOL FACILITY/PROPERTY

f. Appraisal and Sale of District Properties

Fund Source: N/A

Amount: N/A

Ms. Hannigon stated that it appears that this would be handled internally as far as the sale once the appraisal is obtained. Mr. Key stated that it is to be appraised, then it would be how the Board wants to proceed. He stated that for example with the sale of Gretna Elementary School, a for sale sign was put up outside the road next to the property and we took the highest bid on it. He stated that the Board can go that route, or they can go through the appraisal process to find out the actual value of the property. He stated that the Board can get a realtor to sell the property. Ms. Hannigon stated that the item does mention appraisal, and it does also mention posting the properties for sale. She stated that her reason for pulling the item was for there to be some conversation with the Board. She stated that we have the property in Chattahoochee which is somewhat of an isolated situation. She stated because the Board did the financing on that property, we need to be clear about what our expectations are on how we want to move forward with selling the property. She stated that personally the Board should let a realtor handle the selling of the property, but this would come with a price tag. Mr. Frost stated that the Board needed to be sure of what method to use when selling the property. Ms. Hannigon asked the Chairman, if we do not utilize the service of a realtor, does this mean that Attorney Minnis would step in to oversee this transaction when it is sold. Mrs. Minnis stated that there are attorneys at her firm who handle property issues. Mr. McMillan stated that the district leadership is requesting Board approval to have appraised district properties which have the potential to sell and to post them. He stated that we have talked about selling properties on King Street and Telogia Creek Road. He stated that the property on Mine Road has been added to sell. He stated that he would really like to stick to Telogia Creek and the King Street properties as far as appraisals were concerned. He stated that after we have done what we need to do with those two properties, then we move forward with the others. Mr. Frost stated that he wanted to get to the point of getting rid of all of them at one time. Dr. Sylvia Jackson stated that if it's not listed in the packet that you have, the county property office has it listed under a different ownership. Mr. McMillian stated that the goal was to put these properties back on the tax roll. Ms. Hannigon stated that she would prefer that we obtain the services of a realtor so our staff would not have to do the leg work.

Following discussion, Ms. Stacey S. Hannigon made a motion to accept the Superintendent's recommendation to approve agenda item #10f – Appraisal and Sale of District Properties. The motion was seconded by Mr. Steve Scott and carried unanimously.

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

12. EDUCATIONAL ITEMS BY THE SUPERINTENDENT

Mr. Key stated that the Gadsden County Classroom Teacher Association did ratify the TSIA funds. He stated that he needed some guidance from the Board for approval. Mrs. Minnis state that because of the nature of what it is, she recommended that the item be placed on a Board agenda. Mr. Key stated that updates from support services as well as academic service flyers were given to the Board. He stated that the support services flyer has information regarding OPPAGA on the backside of it. He stated that we are getting ready for the OPPGA audit on the half cent sales tax initiative. He stated that he was at James a Shanks Middle School the other day and heard that the kids were spreading a rumor that we are building a new K-12 school. He stated that was not correct, we are building a new K-8 school. He stated that in recent months a post was made that stated that he was speaking against the employees of our school district and mainly teachers, and non-instructional individuals that are part of a union. He stated that he was simply speaking on Senate Bill 1296. He stated that the unions must meet a certain threshold number to maintain their union. He stated that the Bill does not do away with unions, it just requires more people to vote. He stated that there was a news article that was incorrect. He stated that in November 2023, the State required districts to change their evaluation system that included performance of students. He stated that the number of highly effective, and ineffective teachers dropped because the year prior there was no performance pay tied to it. He stated that he was just following the laws that included performance pay. He stated that he was about people representing people the right way.

13. SCHOOL BOARD REQUESTS AND CONCERNS

Mr. Scott stated that he would not be seeking re-election as a Board member. He stated that he is not retiring because he retired in 2014 from the school system after 33 years as a classroom teacher. He stated that he has served 12 years on the School Board. He stated that he may look 25 years old, but he is approaching 73. He stated that there will be no retirement party, or pool party. He stated that he was simply walking away.

Ms. Johnson stated that a transition plan was needed for the finance department. She stated that we have got to start working on a transition plan. She stated that we can't keep these training wheels on these bicycles, we got to take them off.

Ms. Hannigon stated that the clerk's office has funds for a driver's education program that the district can access to expand our driver's education program. She stated that the program is only available virtually. She stated that hopefully she will see driver's education in the curriculum next school term. She stated that she received an email from a parent regarding some issues at West Gadsden Middle School. She stated that she shared the parent's concern with the Superintendent. She stated that she would like to see the district offer an employee assistance program for staff. She stated that an employee recognition program was needed to boost morale. She stated that we are faced with a lot of challenges, so anything that we can do as a Board and as a district to support our employees will be helpful. She asked Mrs. Minnis if she or anyone from her office had responded to the union attorney that previously addressed the Board regarding an email sent to Board members. Mrs. Minnis stated that the Board was provided a copy of the response. Ms. Hannigon requested that the Superintendent have an update on the 23 – 27 strategic plan. She stated that she did not know what the process was for starting to prepare for another one. She stated that she would like to hear from Human Resources during the financial workshop. She stated that she wanted it to be a workshop to hear from the different departments. She thanked the staff, teachers, and everyone for everything that they do for the district. She thanked the Board members for putting up with her and all my questions.

Mr. Frost stated that Gadsden County is not the only county dealing with financial problems. He stated that he saw on the news about Leon County and all their financial problems. He stated that they are talking about cuts and raising taxes. He stated that Leon County is talking about raising taxes 1% again. He stated that you are going to spend a whole lot of money over there. He stated that is why Gadsden County should do the same thing with the ½ cent sales tax. He stated that the state and county are in need of bus drivers. He stated that everybody's dealing with the same issues. He stated that he has confidence in the Superintendent who will sit up late at night and figure things out. He stated that with academics, he's no nonsense He stated that the Superintendent is dedicated to his job.

Mr. McMillian stated that he spoke with Mr. Matthew Bryant earlier today and asked him to be at the meeting. He stated that he wanted to ask him a couple of questions at the meeting. Mr. Key stated that Mr. Bryant was probably on a bus route. He stated that Mr. Bryant fill in when there aren't enough bus drivers. Mr. McMillan stated that he wanted to the Board and the public to know on how the new routing system and how it's being used. He asked if there was an update on recommendations for the students at James A. Shanks Middle School coming into the 2026 – 2027 school year. Mr. Key stated that there is a community meeting scheduled for next month, so the recommendation will be presented to the Board at the April Board meeting. He stated that there are actually several suggestions by the community and some teachers. He stated that the next community meeting is scheduled for April 16th, 6:00 p.m. at George W. Munroe Elementary School.

In response to Mr. McMillan's concern about the Correctional Officer's Program with the law enforcement academy, Mr. Key stated that the MOU must come from Tallahassee State College and then presented to the Board for approval. Mr. McMillan stated that we were talking about doing a survey to see how many students were interested in the program. He stated that the cost for the program was \$1800. He stated that the cost will be taken care through an established scholarship program by the sheriff's department for the first 10 students. He stated that hopefully those 10 students can be added to the program.

Ms. Hannigon wanted to know if there were any student expulsions. Mr. Key stated that there will be some presented at the April Board meeting. Mrs. Hannigon reminded Mrs. Bruner of the request on the payment history for the FEMA workshop. Mrs. Bruner stated that we are still working on it and will be ready at the workshop.

14. The meeting adjourned at 7:09 p.m.